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ABSTRACT

The Teaching/Learning Center (T/LC) at the Jacksonville State University College of Education (Alabama) is Level 2 in a 5-level teacher education program that is intended to build student competency through reflection and revision of the student's teaching practices. T/LC is a practicum laboratory for preservice teachers and an on-campus, after-school tutoring program for a diverse population of children in grades K-12. It is often referred to as the "center for two learners," that is, for both preservice teachers and students. The T/LC practicum, established in 1992, allows the preservice teacher to interact with children by individualizing a one-on-one tutorial in the university setting and under university supervision. In the last 12 years, the program has proved itself a considerable contribution to the community and to the professional growth of the preservice teachers; follow-up surveys given to graduates reaffirm the program's value in the teacher training effort. Preservice teachers gain additional practice through communication with parents, guardians, teachers, and professors. They gain confidence and self-satisfaction while learning to interact with students from varying backgrounds in a caring and supportive manner. (NAV)

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Teacher Education Students as Tutors for a Diverse K-12 Population: A Model Tutorial Program for University-School Collaboration

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Abstract

The Teaching/Learning Center (T/LC) located in the Jacksonville State University College of Education is an award winning, on-campus, after school tutoring program for a diverse population of K-12 children. While the overall intent of the T/LC is to provide a practicum for teacher preparation, the T/LC has increasingly become a community resource for improving academic achievement among area K-12 school students. The T/LC practicum allows the preservice teacher to interact with children by individualizing a one-on-one tutorial within the university setting under university supervision. Preservice teachers gain additional professional practice through communication with parents, guardians, teachers, and professors. Preservice teachers gain confidence and self satisfaction while learning to interact with students from varying backgrounds in a caring and supportive manner.

Teaching/Learning Center:

A Model Tutorial Program for University and School Collaboration

Jacksonville State University (JSU), Jacksonville, Alabama, is a state supported regional institution with six colleges offering over 100 majors. The University ranks in the top forty producers of school personnel in the United States (Foxwell and Madison, 1995). The College of Education is accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the State Department of Education (SDE). JSU is located in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains between two large population centers, Atlanta, Georgia, and Birmingham, Alabama. It draws students from a wide range of backgrounds including rural and city populations as well as a local military base population. Many students are in the first generation in their families to attend college.

The Teaching/Learning Center is a practicum laboratory designed to help prepare preservice teachers for classroom instruction. Preservice teachers work in the T/LC at the JSU campus instructing K-12 children from the surrounding area in a one-on-one tutoring program. Preservice teachers use teaching materials and microcomputers to provide a variety of instructional experiences for both the children and the preservice teachers. Experiences in the T/LC help build on the content of the educational psychology courses that accompany the practicum.

The K-12 students tutored in the College of Education reflect a cultural diversity with an average pupil ratio of 70% white, 20% African-American, and 10% other. Approximately 25% of the children are from families with direct ties to the Fort McClellan military base. The military families have lived in one or more foreign countries for one or more years, and their children have attended over four different schools in their lives. Fifty percent of the students are native Alabamians, and the remaining 25% are children of community and college professionals.

Background: Clinical Experiences

In 1991 the Clinical Experiences program for undergraduate teacher preparation underwent a program reform. The reform reshaped the clinical program to develop the preservice teacher as a *Creative Reflective Decision Maker* (Shulman,1987; Duffy, 1992; Kindsvatter, Wilen, and Ishler, 1992). The present Clinical Experiences program provides experiences that require students to reflect on theory and practice while they collect, record, and analyze their own teaching and that of others. The five level program builds student competency through reflection and revision of their teaching practices (Nichols, 1993). It meets or exceeds the accrediting requirements of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), the State Department of Education (SDE), and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

Level I includes activities that take place in the college classroom under the supervision of a college professor. Students micro-teach and develop projects and units of study. Other activities include creating subject matter portfolios, conducting group research, and participating in in-class presentations.

Level II provides preservice students with their first teaching encounter with one child in their preparation area. During the practicum process the preservice teacher individualizes a program to meet the academic needs of the student in a one-on-one tutoring practicum. The preservice teacher diagnoses student needs and develops lesson plans. The T/LC coordinator reviews all plans.

Level III exposes the preservice teachers to the real classroom with college coursework running parallel to the student's observation of school life. The professor facilitates the JSU student in discovering and constructing meaning from observations and participation in school activities. A handbook provides a description of program requirements along with forms for logging time and

recording evaluations and reflections. College professors and the cooperating classroom teachers monitor student progress.

Level IV is traditional student teaching. College supervisors and classroom cooperating teachers monitor performance and provide evaluation of the student teacher for ten weeks. The purpose of student teaching is to provide a continuous, closely monitored experience that involves observations, participation activities, and extensive teaching time.

Level V provides support services to first year teachers and their area school system supervisors if constructive needs arise. The College of Education surveys area school systems to locate first year teachers in need of support services. Workshops, presentations, and consultations address identified needs.

Teaching/Learning Center Model/Level II

The Teaching/Learning Center (T/LC) is an on-campus, after school, one-to-one tutorial site established in 1982. It is a member of the National Association of Laboratory Schools and the National Tutoring Association. JSU students perform their clinical Level II practicum with K-12 students through the T/LC. Through the T/LC tutoring experience, preservice teachers begin to develop their own teaching abilities. Tutoring potentially offers the best possible context for learning to deal with discipline problems and developing communication skills.

Real world classroom teachers must teach the individual student; therefore, by design, Level II gives the practicum student an opportunity to individualize. Practicum students have access to diagnostic tools, varied teaching tools, and College of Education faculty. With this support and the freedom to make decisions regarding content and curriculum, the practicum student constructs activities that affect children in a positive way. The T/LC is "a center for two learners," since both the JSU preservice teacher and local school children make significant academic and personal progress.

In 1992 a T/LC committee established the current tutoring requirements and produced a handbook that provides preservice teachers with a description of practicum requirements and sample forms (Zenanko, 1995). The practicum is a required laboratory for students enrolled in Child Psychology, Developmental Psychology, and Adolescent Psychology. Occasionally, a student enrolled in other college courses will tutor in the T/LC.

T/LC Objectives and Orientation

The T/LC Handbook states a list of objectives for the tutoring practicum.

The learner will:

- interact appropriately with school age children.
- act as an advocate for the child/adolescent in the tutoring situation.
- demonstrate an active use of the knowledge presented in the respective psychology class, such as, but not restricted to, active listening, behavioral contracts, "I" messages, behavioral language and observation techniques.

Orientations for University tutors set forth the requirements and expectations of the practicum and emphasize the child advocacy component of the program. For example, tutors must report suspected cases of child abuse to the T/LC coordinator.

Tutoring Preparation

Each tutor does advance preparation for the tutorial by creating a tutoring plan. The T/LC coordinator reviews each plan for form, substance, content, and applicability. If any problem is evident, the coordinator writes recommendations on the tutoring plans with references and suggestions. The tutor corrects or revises the tutoring plan accordingly.

Tutoring Plans

Tutors document hourly lessons in a tutoring plan, the first step in learning to write lesson plans. A majority of the preservice teachers have no prior training in writing performance

objectives or a lesson plan. The tutoring plan consists of three sections: a performance objective, a list of materials, and an evaluation and reflection. Students write performance objectives in an ABCD pneumonic format representing audience, performance, condition, and degree (Mager, 1984). Most tutors set quantitative degrees and obtain scores based on answers to questions. However, students write qualitative degrees where appropriate.

Tutors indicate on the tutoring plan a minimum of four teaching materials for the tutorial. The Learning Resource Center (LRC) maintains teaching materials and grade level curriculum guides for all levels of the clinical experiences. Tutors can find many games, manipulatives, books, and references for the tutorial. The LRC houses over 7000 items ranging from board games to an Internet connection.

Tutors rely heavily upon the T/LC computer resources. The T/LC has over 30 minicomputers in use with hardware that includes Apple IIes, MPC 486s, and Power MACs. The entire collection of Minnesota Educational Computing Consortium's Apple IIe library is available. A beginning collection of CD-ROM disks includes Compton's Multimedia Encyclopedia, Microsoft's Encarta, and other reference and edutainment titles. In addition, the T/LC is a copy site for the Alabama Educational Computing Research and Development Network from which tutors may access software specific to the state curriculum. Netscape allows student research to take on a global perspective *via* the Internet. Computer assisted tutoring motivates the tutee and provides another teaching tool for the tutor. For most tutors the T/LC practicum is their first experience with computer assisted instruction.

An interest inventory acts as an ice breaker for the first day of the tutoring session by helping the tutor become acquainted with the child's interests and background. In addition, tutors talk to parents and teachers concerning each tutee's academic needs. After the first day the tutor begins an individualized program for the child.

The tutoring plan provides structure for the daily tutorial. Tutors may modify the tutorial to meet the immediate needs of the child. Children rely heavily on tutors for explanations of homework assignments, clarification of class discussions, and instruction in solving academic problems.

At the completion of each tutorial session, the tutor completes a written reflective response to the tutorial. The tutor states whether the child met the lesson criteria, along with any observations noted during the tutorial. The tutor reflects on the tutorial by examining the thinking and learning processes that occurred. Through this active reflective process the tutor constructs personal knowledge and begins to understand his/her role as a teacher.

Results

In the past twelve years the T/LC has contributed significantly to the community and to the professional growth of the preservice teacher (see Table 1). Most importantly, this tutoring program provides free one-to-one tutoring that makes a difference to the children involved.

An annual Parent Survey indicates that parents perceive the primary strength of the program to be the one-to-one nature of the practicum. Parents report that while the ten week tutorial program is too short, their children make obvious gains.

Since the T/LC does not advertise its services, it depends on word of mouth by area teachers, counselors, and parents. Parental support is critical to the success of this program. Fort McClellan personnel arrange for tutorials before moving to the Jacksonville/Fort McClellan area. Local teachers and counselors keep applications at their school and make referrals during parent/teacher conferences.

Follow-up surveys given to JSU students at the end of their student teaching semester consistently indicate that students value one-to-one tutoring as an important activity. Although students report problems in transferring one-to-one teaching methodology to whole classroom

instruction, the average student rating averages an overall 83% high satisfaction. A 1992 study indicated that pre- and post-test scores in the level II clinical experience affected the greatest positive change in student perception of their teaching ability (Nichols, Zuelke, Owens, Nelson, 1995).

The T/LC was the recipient of the 1987 Innovation in Education Award given by the Southeastern Regional Association. The American Association of State Colleges and Universities awarded the T/LC with the Christa McAuliffe Showcase for Excellence Award in 1988. In 1992 the T/LC founded the National Association of Tutoring and Mentoring (NOTM). NOTM published *Standard Tutoring*, a newsletter with a mailing list of 345 tutoring programs nationwide. In the spring of 1995 NOTM merged with the National Tutoring Association.

Conclusions

A T/LC type practicum model is a possibility for any campus. In its twelve years at JSU the T/LC has grown through grants and networking. The T/LC houses state-of-the-art computers and teaching materials to help in the tutoring process. Because the program is free to the public, it can accommodate children from a variety of backgrounds. The advantages of creating a similar program at other campuses include developing a community service, providing a valuable experience to preservice teachers, providing a hands-on practicum activity, and creating a university controlled learning experience. The T/LC has indeed earned the title "center for two learners."

Table 1

Number of INE students	Number of K-12 students
245	2,275
551	3,265
639	3,301
848	5,800
906	8,470
943	6,790
*	*
314	2,500
1110	11,100
631	6,310
501	5,010
351	6,100
491	7,910
7,530	68,831

* Data not available for 1988-89 academic year.

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